

Message Text

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21

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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5558

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 3072

E.O.11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, BG

SUBJECT: CONVERSTION WITH GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN

1. AT SOCIAL FUNCTION GIVEN BY BANGLADESHIA EVENING AUGUST 17, AMBASSADOR HAD OPPORTUNITY FOR EXTENDED DISCUSSION WITH BANGLADESH DEPUTY CHIEF MATTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN WHO IS ATTENDING NAM SUMMIT IN CAPACITY OF FREIGN MINISTER.

2. ZIA STARTED OUT BY ASKING AMBASSADOR ABOUT ISSUES BEFORE THE NAM SUMMIT IN WHICH U.S. WAS INTERESTED. AMBASSADOR RAN DOWN U.S. VIEWS ON KOREA, MIDDLE EAST, ISRAELI EXPULSION ISSUE AND PUERTO RICO TO WHICH ZIA LISTENED CLOSELY.

3. HE THEN ASKED IF THE INDAIN OCEAN PEACE ZONE (IOPZ) PROPOSAL WERE NOT AN ISSUE OF INTEREST TO US. IN REPLY, THE AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT OUR VIEW THAT THE IOPZ ISSUE IS A COMPLEX MATTER WHICH REQUIRES CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BECAUSE IT IMPINGES ON THE CHARACTER OF THE HIGH SEAS AND DISARMAMEMT QUESTIONS. ZIA THEN VOLUNTEERED THAT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN THE AREA THAT WANT THE US TO STAY AROUND. HE SAID THAT THE PRESSURES BEING EXERTED BY THE OTHER SIDE ARE SO
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GREAT THAT MANY FEEL IT IS OVER REACTING AND THEIR

EFFORTS HAVE BECOME COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. IN THE NON-ALIGNED CONTEXT, HE THOUGHT THE LANGUAGE ON THE IOPZ WOULD BE SOFTENED CONSIDERABLY.

4. ON THE DOMESTIC SITUATION IN BANGLADESH, GENERAL ZIA WAS QUITE UPBEAT. HE CLAIMED THAT GOVERNMENTAL REORGANIZATION WAS GATHERING MOMENTUM AND THAT THEY HAVE MADE PROGRESS IN PLACING QUALIFIED PEOPLE IN IMPORTANT POSITIONS. HE SAID CROPS ARE GOOD, PRODUCTION IS UP AND INFLATION HAS BEEN CURBED CONSIDERABLY. HOWEVER, THERE IS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO. HE EXPRESSED WARM APPRECIATION OF WHAT US HAS DONE FOR BANGLADESH AND SAID HE HOOPED US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WOULD NOT BE DIMINISHED BECAUSE OF THIS UPTURN ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE AS US AID WILL BE NEEDED FOR A LONG TIME.

5. ZIA WAS VERY IMPRESSIVE. HE SEEMED QUITE OPTIMISTIC AND APPEARED IN COMPLETE COMMAND OF THE SITUATION. HE DID NOT RAISE SUBJECT OF INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS.
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